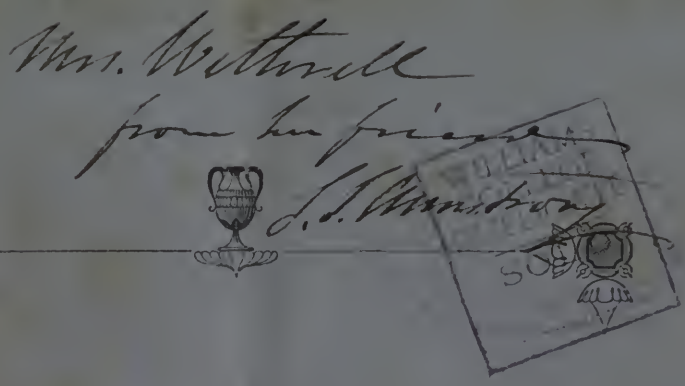
A 001 031 517 4
UC SOUTHERN REGIONAL LIBRARY FACILITY

GREENE
Ministerial Fidelity Exemplified

BX
7260
C798
G7

1(C)



SERMON

AT THE FUNERAL OF

THE REV. DANIEL CROSBY.

Ministerial Fidelity Exemplified.

A

SERMON

AT THE FUNERAL OF

THE REV. DANIEL CROSBY,

LATE PASTOR OF

THE WINTHROP CHURCH, CHARLESTOWN,

MARCH 3, 1843.

BY

DAVID GREENE.

BOSTON:
T. R. MARVIN, 24 CONGRESS STREET.
1843.

NOTE.

The death of Mr. Crosby occurred in Charlestown, on the 28th of February. The following Sermon was preached at the request of the Winthrop Church, in their house of worship, on occasion of the funeral; and, in conformity with a request from the same source, it is now printed. Written hastily at first, as the circumstances rendered unavoidable, it has been revised with some care, though not essentially enlarged or altered, with the hope of making it give a less incorrect and inadequate view, than it originally did, of the character, labors, and influence of the deceased. The freedom which characterizes the remarks respecting Mr. Crosby will not appear unseemly, if it is borne in mind that they come from one who was associated with him in his collegiate and theological education, and who for nearly twenty years, and especially during the last ten, was favored with his intimate and confidential friendship.

Missionary House, Boston,
10 March, 1843.

SERMON.

JOHN XVII. 4.

I HAVE FINISHED THE WORK WHICH THOU GAVEST ME TO DO.

THUS Christ speaks relative to the specific work which he was commissioned to perform in his state of humiliation. What might appropriately be denominated his WORK on earth was finished before his parting interview with the twelve, a few hours previous to his arrest and crucifixion. The toil which preceded his public ministry, and the scene of fasting and temptation which introduced him to it, were ended. His travels on errands of mercy over the hills and valleys of Judea and Galilee, were past. He had no more discussions to hold with the ignorant and erring, and no more rebukes to administer to the caviller and blasphemer. The inquirer and the disconsolate would no more come to him for counsel and comfort. He had no more miracles to work; the voice of the dumb, the hearing of the deaf, the sight of the blind, the restored reason of the lunatic, the renewed vigor of the paralytic, the returning health to the sick and life to

the dead, and the submission of stormy winds and even of devils to his word, had given ample testimony that he came from God, and they would be repeated no more. His seasons of solitary prayer and communion with the Father were over. He would have no more of those endearing interviews with his disciples, by which he had been training them for their future ministry. The light of his example, and the balmy influences of his spirit, so gentle and benevolent, were no more to pervade the companies which followed him, or listened to the gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth.

How perfectly were the few years of our Saviour's ministry filled up! Whether alone, or with his disciples, or with the multitude—whether journeying, or at rest—whether on the sea, or on the land, how constantly was he saying or doing something which had its influence then, which is having an influence now, and whose influence shall last till all the redeemed shall be gathered in. No time was lost—no duty was omitted.

I HAVE FINISHED THE WORK WHICH THOU GAVEST ME TO DO. All was done which the counsels of the Godhead required; all which the law required; all which the redemption of a fallen world required; all which the introduction of the new dispensation, and the future instruction and perfection of his people required. All the WORK was finished. The suffering scene alone remained; and as he hung expiring on the cross, when the hour of agony

which completed the atonement was ending, he cried, 'It is finished!' and gave up the ghost.

What would not any considerate man give to be able, when life shall be closing, to look up to God in humble sincerity, and with the testimony of a good conscience, say respecting himself, 'I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do!'

To be able to say this honestly and intelligently, is the great preparation for death. Every follower of Christ, and especially every gospel minister, ought so to live and labor, in imitation of his divine Master and Pattern, that he can make this language his own. Such should be his distinct aim as he enters the ministry; and by never suffering himself to be in arrears in respect to duty, but by diligence and punctuality, determining that every departing year and every closing day shall see its appropriate work completed, he should keep this in his eye, as the measure of his attainment, till years and days of labor shall be past, and he can stand, when God shall call him away from earth, and say, through grace, full of satisfaction and peace, 'I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do.'

We must not compare the servant with his Lord. Nor, since each of the servants must say, 'By the grace of God I am what I am,' should we invidiously compare them one with another; but it may be said, and all who knew him intimately will respond to its truth, that few of Christ's servants, at the close of life, could more appropriately employ

the words of the text, than our brother, whose removal from the toils of earth to the rest of heaven, has called together this mourning assembly. Few have labored more diligently and faithfully; and few have left undone less that it was incumbent on them to do.

As my remarks in illustration of this will be confined almost exclusively to the public ministry of our departed brother, they can be expected to embrace little that will be new to those whom I address; most of whom, from having either enjoyed his pastoral care and instruction, or taken part with him in the same ministry, well know and appreciate his character and labors.

But to review the course of a man, who, not distinguished by graces of person or manner—with no uncommon powers for acquiring or retaining knowledge—with no fascinations of elocution, or style, or fancy—with the practice of no art or policy, accomplished so much in a short life, and accomplished it so well;—who so universally secured the love and respect of those who knew him, and actually exerted so great and salutary an influence in his appropriate sphere,—may afford us interesting and useful lessons. Let us, then, before we convey away out of our sight, that body which we have so often looked upon, but which, after this day, we shall see no more, attempt to group together and impress on our minds some of those elements of excellence and power, which entered

into the character and were manifested in the labors of our brother, and which we hope never to forget.

1. One of these was *the thorough spiritual preparation which he had for his work.* He began the work of the ministry aright—with a thorough conversion and a hearty and intelligent dedication of himself to God. Though of pious parentage and having had the advantages of early religious training, when he entered Yale College, New Haven, in the autumn of 1819, it was with a mind little impressed with religious subjects and almost exclusively devoted to his studies. But before his first year expired a revival commenced in the college and city, which has hardly had a parallel in the annals of that highly favored place. For some time Mr. Crosby stood aloof and was unaffected. But by and by the Spirit of God turned his thoughts in upon his own heart, opened gradually, one after another, the chambers of imagery there, showing him one abomination after another, holding all the while clearly before him the divine law, and uttering in his ear in steady and awful tones its dreadful denunciations. The world soon grew dark to him; the ambition of the scholar forsook him; and with bowed head, and pale and saddened face, and hurried step you might see him traversing the streets or the fields, with the language of Paul almost written on his forehead, 'Oh wretched man that I am; who shall deliver me from the body of this death!'

Many months elapsed while he was thus drinking

of the wormwood and the gall, and the Holy Spirit was carrying him lower and lower into the depths of his own heart, showing him, past all controversy or question, that it was enmity against God; that it was deceitful above all things and desperately wicked; and that while the law was holy, he was carnal, sold under sin. When thus the whole structure of his self-righteousness had been, stone after stone, taken down before his eyes, and its very foundations razed, he was enabled to say, 'Out of the depths have I cried unto thee, O Lord. If thou, Lord, shouldest mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand? But there is forgiveness with thee that thou mayest be feared. I wait for the Lord, my soul doth wait, and in his word do I hope.'

When he had been thus taught why he needed a Saviour, and what sort of a Saviour he must have, Christ and the plan of salvation were presented to his mind with no less clearness than his own sin and ruin had previously been. But though his opposition to the law and his self-righteousness were gone; and though the character, the fitness, and the wonderful mercy of the atonement were clearly discerned; and though he would have short periods of admiration and joy, as his thoughts fastened upon Christ, yet from the picture drawn before him of his own heart he could not sufficiently turn his eye—he was not at a sufficient remove from the pit of destruction—he was not sure enough that his feet were planted on the Rock,—to permit

him to make Christian peace and joy permanent inmates of his bosom. He stood there, between Sinai and Calvary, now hearing the thunders, and now looking at the cross; now his convictions and heart-breakings prevailing, and now crying out, 'Oh the depth of the riches, both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments and his ways past finding out!' *

But on these scenes we must not dwell longer. Suffice it to say that this state of mind—this keeping one eye on the law and the other on the cross—this fluctuation between painful conviction on the one

* As an illustration, characteristic of Mr. Crosby, and especially of his state of mind at this time, it may be mentioned, that, during these days of darkness, while he appeared and was thought by all to be the very picture of disconsolateness, if not of despair, he accosted a fellow student, in the college yard, whose appearance and state of mind were not very unlike his own. "What," thought his fellow, "can that heart-broken, despairing man have to say to me? Surely he can have no comfort to impart." Mr. Crosby addressed him, and with a countenance where joy was conflicting with sadness, as the rays of the setting sun sometimes struggle from beneath a gloomy cloud, told him not to despond; to remember that there is a Saviour, even for the chief of sinners; and affectionately and earnestly plead with him to believe on Christ.

In adverting to those days he has repeatedly remarked that, occasionally, while walking abroad or sitting at his study window, the cloud would break away from his mind, and he would contemplate the character and works of God, and the great things of the law and the gospel, for hours, with unutterable satisfaction and joy. In these intervals he would hardly think of himself, whether he had been born again or not—whether he was to be saved or lost. The whole mind was absorbed in these views of God and his kingdom. Soon, however, his thoughts would revert to himself, the cloud would close down upon him, and all would be as dark and comfortless as before. Still at these times he loved prayer and was much occupied in it.

hand, and the Christian hope on the other, continued to the close of his college life, and perhaps it may be said, through his preparatory theological course,—his faith and hope steadily growing stronger, and affording him a more abiding peace and joy; while he was girding on the Christian armor, and learning how to ward off the fiery darts of the adversary, and where to find relief from the accusings of a guilty conscience and the condemnation of the law.

This scene through which Mr. Crosby passed had a forming influence on his religious character. He who feels that to him much has been forgiven, will love much. And it had no less influence on his labors. Feeling that he had been bought with a PRICE, he would glorify God with his body and spirit, which were God's. KNOWING the terrors of the Lord, he would persuade men. It was in these solitary walks—in these closet self-examinations, where the Spirit of God brought the divine law and his own heart in review together, and then unfolded before him the gospel remedy;—it was in this intelligent, heart-breaking conviction for sin—his own sin—clearly seen and felt and hated;—it was in the view which he then got of his own personal need of Christ—in his appropriating Christ to himself to meet his own wants as he felt them—it was by the operations of his own mind under the influence of these things, and the results to which he came, that Mr. Crosby was prepared to preach the gospel experimentally, as well as scripturally. When he

presented in his preaching the character or the law of God, the provisions of the gospel, the precepts, promises, or threatenings of the Bible, he presented what he had seen and felt, and into conformity with which he was honestly endeavoring to bring his own heart and life. His own Christian experience under the power of the truth was his guide and means of adaptation, and was one source of the strength, pathos, and effectiveness of his public and private instructions.

When Mr. Crosby joined the church, which he did in the latter part of his second year in college, he did it deliberately, knowing what it meant; after such a trial of his character as made him hope, with God's assistance, to conform to his professions: and though often disheartened and almost overwhelmed, for long periods together, with views of his sins and weaknesses, temptations and falls, he seldom, if ever, from this time gave up his hope. He had seen too much to admit of this: he was sure that he had built on the right foundation, and that he could not be mistaken: and during the protracted seasons of depression to which he was subject, up to the time of his entering the ministry, when an observer would expect nothing from him but the language of despair, the friend, whom he admitted to the recesses of his bosom, would find that his hope in Christ was scarcely shaken.

He entered the ministry knowing what a work he was undertaking. It was to unfold a law which had convicted and slain himself—to proclaim an

atoning Saviour whom his faith apprehended—to introduce others to a race of Christian holiness and effort in which he was himself struggling—and to conduct them to a heaven where he looked for his own reward. His preaching was, therefore, the preaching of experience. And who would wish to be a Christian preacher, without a Christian experience? Who could bear, in his study and in the pulpit, to be continually pondering statute books, examining witnesses, passing sentence, and reading death-warrants against his own soul?

But we must pass on.

2. Another element which contributed to give excellence and power to the ministry of our departed brother, was that *he understood the nature and responsibleness of his work.* His faith embraced and gave reality to all the revelations of the Bible. By their momentous importance and thrilling interest, his whole soul had, in his religious experience, been moved. The infinite and eternal God, his law, the penalty of transgression, the remedy by Christ's atonement, death and judgment, heaven and hell, were objects which his ministry was to handle and unfold; and in unfolding them, it would bear upon the salvation or perdition of undying souls. He was to bring out and press on the minds of his hearers just those truths which the Holy Spirit had inspired, and which that same Spirit was to employ to regenerate and sanctify men. His was, and he felt it to be so, an embassy from God

to sinners—a ministry of RECONCILIATION—a ministry of reconciliation to be effected in a specific manner—BY CHRIST. With this he was most deeply impressed; and though there are great and precious promises made to the faithful minister, on which our departed brother relied; and though he drank of those well-springs of joy which are found along his path, yet the nature, responsibleness, and consequences of his work weighed upon him with great solemnity, and chastened his natural vivacity and buoyancy of spirit.

Looking at the ministry in this light, he still felt impelled to enter it. 'Wo is me, if I preach not the gospel,' was the language of his heart. He devoted himself to it, as his chosen profession. He loved all departments of the work, and he determined faithfully to perform the duties of them all—to God's acceptance, and to the spiritual growth and salvation of his hearers.

As a public religious teacher, Mr. Crosby was lucid, scriptural, and rational. There was a vein of common sense and practicalness, an honesty of intention, a directness of aim at the intended object, and an earnestness in his endeavors to accomplish it, which were highly characteristic; and his sermons, while they did not bear the marks of great genius, or learning, or profound research, yet showed, every one of them, that they had been laboriously thought out and constructed by himself. He was not confined to the common round of texts and topics; nor, having selected his text, did he

run into some thread-bare division of the subject, or fill his discourse from commentaries or with every-day thoughts, as common to his hearers as the air they breathed. In his preaching there was an invention and originality not often seen in an equal degree, giving it a peculiar freshness and charm, and causing him to be listened to, through his whole ministry, with ever-increasing interest and pleasure. No vagueness of thought or phraseology, spreading a dimness over the truth, left it without point or aim. Every sermon was designed to accomplish a definite object, and that was not to startle or please, but to benefit his hearers.

His appeals to the conscience and heart, especially in his vestry lectures and meetings for inquirers, were adapted to bow and melt the hardest transgressors. Here was seen the eloquence of conviction, the eloquence of faith, the eloquence of a love, which, apprehending the destiny of the soul, panted to save it.

In discussing theological topics, he showed that he had studied and understood them; and in expressing the results of his investigations, he was, as in his manner of thinking, discriminating and clear. He loved his study and its labors, and was much and profitably employed there. He preserved unimpaired the stock of knowledge acquired in his preparatory studies, and by reading and meditation he was steadily increasing it; and in freshness and vigor of thought, and in ministerial ability and influence, there was a constant advance.

Neither in his preaching nor in his private intercourse, did he bring forth any new theological speculations, or favorite theories, or striking paradoxes. His aim was to use the truth of God for doing God's work, while he left others to theorise or contend as they might have heart or time for them. He had none for either. He joined no party, advocated none, was ranked with none, drew on himself the opposition of none. He neither had a bigoted attachment to what was old, nor a morbid craving after what was new. His sermons, embracing doctrine, precept, motive, exhortation, reproof, warning, and promise, in due order and proportion, and such as the known exigencies of his hearers demanded, were, above those of most other men, designed and adapted to be understood, to impart instruction, to awaken new trains of thought, to lead to consideration and feeling, and by scriptural means to exert on the minds of his hearers a great and permanent influence of the best kind. Every hearer of them, while he was sure of the honesty of the man, felt that some of his own wants were met, and some of his own experience described.

In Mr. Crosby there was an enthusiasm and enterprise, an affability, and a ready entering into the feelings and circumstances of all, which gave him a peculiar hold on the younger portion of his congregation, and in them, especially in the young men of his church, he felt a lively concern. In adapting lectures to their improvement and in other efforts to form in them a solid Christian character, to give

them enlarged views of Christian duty, and to cultivate habits of Christian action, he devoted much thought and labor.

The peculiar doctrines of the gospel constituted his great theme. Jesus Christ and him crucified—the truths which emanate from and cluster around that point, he delighted habitually to dwell upon. No one had clearer views of man's utterly depraved and lost condition as a sinner, or of the truths inseparable from this—that Christ's vicarious sacrifice is the only meritorious ground of pardon and acceptance with God, and that there is no holiness or spiritual life in man until it is imparted to him by the Holy Ghost.

His standard of morals was truly scriptural, and was exemplified by himself and enforced on his hearers, without compromise.

As a Pastor, Mr. Crosby was remarkably methodical and efficient. As to his official visits to his people, as a shepherd set to watch over the flock, few, if any of them, are disposed to charge him with partiality or neglect, or with want of fidelity and appropriateness. His work was planned out and kept before him. He took pains to know the religious state of every family, and almost, may it be said, as far as the human mind can know, the religious state of every soul. His visits were always acceptable, and families, even the children in them, love to expatiate on what they enjoyed on such occasions. He loved to go to the chamber of sickness or bereavement; and often has he remarked

that there was no other place where he had so much enjoyment or loved so well to be, as by the bed-side of the dying Christian. He loved to commune with the spirit that had done with earth, and was just soaring away to look on the face of Jesus, and join in that more blissful communion with saints and angels in heaven. In his own spiritual children, in such circumstances, he saw the object of his ministry to them accomplished, and as he delivered over their souls to the great Shepherd, his joy was unspeakable.

With the religious inquirer our deceased brother delighted to meet. He knew what were the heart-rending convictions of sin and ill-desert, the assurance of condemnation, the darkness and helplessness, and the withering forebodings of such a state; for he remembered the hole of the pit whence he was digged. With great patience and tenderness, therefore, would he unfold the remedy which the gospel promises. He would not, under the influence of a morbid sympathy for the sinner, lose sight of his guilt and labor to make him feel comfortably; nor, with superficial views of human depravity and the kind of regeneration needed, would he leave the sinner to suppose that a mere change of purpose or course of life was sufficient. His aim was to turn the thoughts of the inquirer deeply enough into his own heart to make him feel what sort of a regeneration he needed, and by whose agency it must be wrought, and to make him see the nature and appropriateness of Christian faith and repentance, and

with all his heart to exercise them. His whole intercourse with inquirers and converts was uncommonly well adapted to form living, intelligent, enterprising, and steadfast disciples.

But when he had performed these plain and ordinary duties, he did not feel that he had done all that was incumbent upon him. He took enlarged views of his vocation. Instead of being disposed to contract its boundaries and free himself from as much care and labor as possible, he coveted labor, and was ever watchful to ascertain and perform all the duties which came appropriately within his sphere as a gospel minister. The most characteristic views which Mr. Crosby entertained of his work remain to be mentioned.

In such a world as this, and with such examples and such injunctions as the New Testament contains, he could not feel that he or his people ought to live for themselves; or that his own work or theirs was done when they had secured their own salvation. His Master and theirs came not to be ministered unto but to minister, and in so doing left an example that they should follow in his steps. Instead, therefore, of leaving those of whom he had the oversight in the Lord to suppose that all they had to do was to accumulate to themselves as many Christian privileges as possible, and leave the rest of the world to take care of themselves, his constant endeavor was to awaken in his people an enlarged philanthropy and Christian PUBLIC SPIRIT—to make them feel that to render according to the

benefits received, was a Christian duty, a means of spiritual enjoyment, and of religious discipline and perfection. Scarcely with more urgency or frequency did he beseech men to become reconciled to God, or to believe on Christ, than he unfolded and pressed home the duty of living not unto themselves, but unto Him who died for them and rose again. The very impulse of his heart was to labor, expend, calculate, and live for furthering the cause of Christ and human salvation; and his constant endeavor was to inspire his people with the same desire and purpose to live for doing good.

Though pre-eminently interested in the spread of the gospel among the heathen, Mr. Crosby did not give his whole strength and influence to that, while other kindred objects were undervalued and neglected. He was the friend and the zealous advocate before his people, of whatever seemed to him to be a practicable scheme, undertaken on the principles and in the spirit of the New Testament, and falling within their appropriate sphere, for promoting the welfare of mankind.

Nor did he fear that such a course of instruction to his people would have any injurious influence on his own pecuniary interest or theirs. That the liberal soul shall be made fat—that he that watereth shall be watered also himself—and that it is more blessed to give than to receive, he fully believed.

Nor did he fear any disastrous influence from this course on the spiritual interests of his people, even if it was a time of religious revival. To convince

men of sin and bring them to repentance for neglect of such duties as these, or to bring them to right feelings, purposes, and conduct here, was, in his view, as valuable as to produce the like results on any other point. In his opinion the calls of this nature, which could properly be brought before a congregation on the Sabbath, may be so presented as not unfavorably to interfere with the spirit or progress of a religious revival.

Nor did he limit his instructions and exhortations on these subjects to those occasions when the contributions of his people were to be called for, and thus leave them to be ever associated in their minds with begging and giving. The sinful and wretched condition of this world—almost the whole race moving on, by whole generations, like one broad river, down to death and to hell,—God's plan for saving it—the Scripture commands and promises on this point—the openings and calls—the triumphant progress of the gospel in many places—the powerful motives to prayer and unwearied effort—the predicted and hastening subjection of all to Christ,—were great themes which dilated his heart, and on which he delighted often to commune with his people.

While he believed that, in the present state of things, agents in behalf of benevolent objects cannot well be dispensed with, and therefore admitted them freely to his pulpit, and did what he could to render a very unpleasant kind of labor easy and successful, he was not willing to lose to himself,

and give to them, all the interest which communicating fresh intelligence relative to the great religious enterprizes of the day awakened among his people. The advantage of that he determined to secure to himself, to give permanent effect to his ministry; and by keeping them early and thoroughly informed on all these subjects, he effectually attained his end. This he could not do without carefully and correctly furnishing his own mind, which he did methodically, as a duty and a means of usefulness, from the very beginning of his ministry. I have not known the man, who, on all the religious enterprizes of the day, possessed equally extensive and accurate information,—and this treasured up, almost exclusively, from the common publications of the day, to which nearly all in the ministry had access as readily and extensively as he.

Nor did he fear that he should alienate his people from him or introduce divisions among them by calling for their prayers and their co-operation in these great undertakings. On the contrary, he believed that nothing would attach them more strongly to himself, or exert a more harmonizing influence among themselves, than bringing them to think, and sympathize, and labor together, as Christ's servants, for the salvation of the world. What room or heart for strifes under such influences?—and where, among a people thus led on and thus laboring, were they ever known?

In this connection his manner of conducting the monthly concert for prayer must not be unnoticed.

The purpose and the plan to render that an interesting meeting, the year round, to all classes of persons, by the introduction of systematized and thoroughly prepared information, on almost all subjects relating to the condition and wants of the world and the advancement of Christ's kingdom, with maps and other illustrations, was, so far as I am informed, sixteen years ago, unprecedented, and was perfectly original with our deceased brother. He began the work in a retired country parish, with no library, or bookseller's shop, or reading-room within his reach, and with no other resources, more than almost any country minister may command. He had at the same time the concerns of an extended and numerous parish on his hands, and that too at the very beginning of his ministry. But his heart was in the work; and by system in his periodical reading during the month, with the devotion of the whole of the first Monday to special preparation for it, he raised the concert, from a mere handful of church members, to be the largest and most interesting week-day meeting which he held. The same plan, with the same results, he carried out after his removal to this place, till the close of his public ministry.

His public spirited labors in other ways, in behalf of various religious enterprizes, were not few or of little value. But time will not permit them to be dwelt upon. And yet he had no more time, no more strength, no greater resources, and no fewer cares and interruptions than other men. He per-

formed a work, in this respect, in those spheres of labor where the providence of God placed him, which, if performed by all other pastors, according to their ability, in their several spheres, would supersede in a day those numerous, expensive, and oftentimes conflicting and annoying agencies, which religious enterprize has introduced, and substitute in their place a system of operations, without expense, and altogether more natural, more satisfactory, and more efficient.

It is not necessarily to be inferred that the minister should ADD these to his other labors; but it is worthy of consideration whether he may not incorporate these with them—making these a part of them, to the improvement of his own spiritual state and character,—so as to render his influence as a minister more extensive, powerful, and salutary,—and so as most to benefit his own people, and advance the kingdom of Christ generally.

One more remark relative to Mr. Crosby as a pastor must be made. He well understood how to be an example to the flock. He was not perfect; but in his social, Christian, and ministerial character and deportment, how little there was which could be marked out as censurable! There were no eccentricities—no outbursts of passion—no unhappy developments of unchristian speeches or conduct, made from time to time to distract and alienate his people. There was in him neither prodigality nor penuriousness—neither frivolity nor moroseness—neither compromise with the world nor seclusion

from it—neither forwardness nor timidity,—to call forth disparaging remarks. Neither with his people, nor with others, had he any collisions or strifes to detract from his influence and bring reproach. A good name or an influence once acquired, he never lost by indiscretions, foibles, or negligence. By his doctrine and his life he taught his people how to live; by the spiritual consolations which he administered to the afflicted, and by his own example too, he taught them how to bear the sorrows and bereavements of life; and now, by closing his days among you, as well as by his former counsels to the dying, he has taught you how to die. May he not say, as he goes to his rest, I HAVE FINISHED THE WORK WHICH THOU GAVEST ME TO DO!

3. *The spirit with which our deceased brother entered on and prosecuted his work*, demands a few remarks.

The characteristic, controlling feeling of his mind was that he was a STEWARD; that he was to live and die for Christ and the church—Christ's servant to do his work in the church. He loved intellectual pursuits and he loved social intercourse: but as he did not live for himself, his indulgence in these must be regulated by the demands of the service he had entered upon. He loved his family, and much did he care for and enjoy them: but he did not live for his family. He took a deep interest in public affairs and carefully observed passing events, but he was not to be a mere spectator, or to be absorbed

in the agitations of such a world as this. The work of Christ in the gospel ministry was before him. To that he was heartily devoted.

While no man more fully believed that any and all means are powerless to convert and save the soul, until rendered effectual by the Spirit of God, none saw more clearly than our deceased brother, the importance of the unintermitted and laborious use of means, the most powerful and best adapted, for accomplishing this end. On these fundamental principles he ever acted. With him the ministry was not a merely professional business, which he had adopted as best fitted to afford him an easy and comfortable livelihood, and give him a place in respectable society. Nor was it a vocation which he had chosen, because, by connecting him with a church and congregation as their spiritual instructor and guide, it would give him conspicuousness and influence, and thus gratify a desire for pre-eminence. To such feelings he seemed, in an uncommon degree, to be a stranger.

He well understood what were his obligations and privileges as a preacher and pastor, and what were those of his people; and while he faithfully performed his own duties, and affectionately unfolded and pressed theirs upon them, of his rights he seldom, if ever, had inclination or cause to speak. From office or prerogative he asked nothing and expected nothing. He desired not to be clothed with any official dignity, or to be defended with any official armor. He made no demand for respect, or sub-

mission to his authority, or deference to his measures, because of his station or office. Of deference, or respect, or influence of any kind, he neither expected or desired any more than he should fairly earn a title to by his character and his faithful public-spirited labors. Yet he did exert an influence over his own people, and a respect and deference were most cheerfully accorded to him by them, beyond what mere title, or office, or arrogant pretension and claim ever won.

Nor was it his aim to be just enough of a Christian and a minister, to hold a fair standing with his people and his brethren; and at the same time secure to himself a quiet, easy, genteel life. All such calculation filled him with unutterable grief and disgust. He sought something higher and beyond. To him the ministry was a WORK—literally a SERVICE—a MINISTRATION to others: And his great inquiry was, How shall I acquit myself to Christ? How save the souls of my people? Their good opinion he highly valued, as a rational gratification and a means of augmented influence; but he would purchase it with no other price than that of faithfulness as a watchman for their souls.

In the prosecution of his work Mr. Crosby manifested uncommon judgment and self-knowledge in correctly estimating his own powers and in never undertaking any thing that was above them or out of their line. He knew well what to attempt, and what the circumstances in which he was placed called for. Nor did he display less wisdom in select-

ing appropriate means for accomplishing his ends. Here were seen oftentimes great ingenuity and inventiveness. His insight into human nature and his sagacity almost invariably enabled him to foresee how his plans and measures would strike those on whom they were designed to bear, and to predict the result. He knew how to employ himself to good effect, both in his study and in his more active labors. Without any feature of his character being so prominent as to arrest special attention, there was in him a combination and right adjustment of good qualities, a symmetry and balance of mind, a wise direction and unreserved devotedness of his powers—an economy of them—a knowing how to make the most of himself, and to turn all to the best account, not often seen.

Nor was he less patient under hard and protracted labor. He was willing to wear out; and when remonstrated with for tasking himself so much, he would, with a tone and an expression of countenance that spoke his heart, bring to view one pressing call after another, where the spiritual welfare of his people was concerned, and say, I love this work; souls are perishing. How can I desist? Still, if in such a work it is proper to say that any labors are excessive, Mr. Crosby cannot, perhaps, be wholly cleared from the charge of imprudent disregard of health and life. The fault, however, if fault there was, was so much like an excellence, that they who possess most of their Master's spirit are most exposed to it, and will therefore best

understand its origin and be least severe in their censures. With a little more self-control under emergencies, he might, probably, each year of his ministry, have accomplished as much as he did, and yet have preserved his health unimpaired.

Mr. Crosby was devoted to the ministry among his own people. All his powers were concentrated on that. It absorbed his thought and feeling by day, and often held him waking by night. He lived for his people. They were his joy and crown. In his study, in his pulpit, and in his walks abroad, their spiritual interests were before him. And they saw that he lived for them and in them; and that there was a concentration of his powers and labors upon them, and a consecration of himself to them, which could not be mistaken. This softened and impressed their minds, and enabled him to mould their characters, and, as it were, to stamp the image of his own on them, so as never to be effaced. This gave him his power over them. It was the singleness and honesty of his character and course as their spiritual shepherd.

Nor was this at all inconsistent with his interest and labors in behalf of religious and benevolent enterprises. What he did for these he did through his people, leading them or associated with them. He did it all as their minister—as what was involved in and essential to his carrying out and completing his ministry among them—as the officer of this portion of the Lord's host, to train them, to lead them on to the work or the conflict or the vic-

tory. But in his case the minister was never lost sight of in the agent or the advocate; nor, on the other hand, was the range of that benevolence which should embrace the world, ever circumscribed by the limits of a single congregation.

And what must be the *results* of *such a ministry?* Of course the united love and respect of his people. At Conway, where he spent nearly six years of his ministry, and where he was called to his work with great unanimity, there was a growing interest in his preaching and pastoral labors, and a steady advance in the religious and missionary feeling of the people till his removal. The impressions made, especially on the young, by his sermons, his concert lectures, and his family visits, are still fresh in their most affectionate and respectful recollections, and can never be forgotten. The transfer of his services to another field was deeply regretted by them. To his labors in the Winthrop Church he came with the unanimous vote of both church and proprietors; and those best informed have confidently expressed the opinion, that, had the question of his retaining his station been agitated at any time during the nearly nine years of his ministry here, he would have had a similar vote; and that, at the time when his pastoral relation to this church was dissolved, there was not a member of this whole congregation, male or female, adult or child, who would not, had his health been sound, have preferred him to any other minister. Such an instance of unanimity, so entire

and so long continued, is a rare thing in these days. It can be purchased in other instances by those, and probably those only, who will pay for it a similar price. Re-invigorate that body, bring back, if we may, that Pauline spirit that used to inhabit it. Let that heart beat, that mind devise, that tongue speak, and those hands work again; and place that man, new set up, in any parish in New England, and see if all who approve the truth will not unite to hear, love, and honor him.

Here was where Mr. Crosby's greatness lay; and with this his ministry was adapted to exert a wide and powerful influence in forming and improving character. The man who loves his work so much—has such an appetite for it—is susceptible of so deep and abiding an enthusiasm in it, as to make it the object of his most constant and strongest thought and feeling, can hardly fail to be great in that thing. A susceptibility of feeling such a controlling interest in any department of labor or study,—which in a minister is the same thing as tenderness of heart and a mind alive to spiritual things,—is, so far as success in that is concerned, more than half of genius,—if not so brilliant as what is commonly denominated so, it is more steady and safe, and more enduring in its results. Upon those who fall within the appropriate influence of such a mind, a power will be felt—silent, unostentatious, and inoffensive—but great and salutary. Such was the power exerted by our departed brother, not only over the churches where his labors were bestowed, but on

the community where he resided, with whom he was not brought into so close contact;—an influence the fruits of which will not soon cease to be felt, though it may not be easily demonstrated or measured. This influence was greatest upon the young. But men of every class, even those who disliked his religious doctrines, saw in him an honest and enterprising laboriousness, a frank, honorable, and judicious course of action, a freedom from extravagant, ill-timed, or ill-judged speculations and measures, which led them to confide in him and respect him; and which prepared their minds to listen with candor, as many of them often did, while he unfolded, at his occasional lectures, the great doctrines and duties of the gospel.

There was also the direct and common result of a faithful ministry—that of religious revival and spiritual growth in the churches where he labored. During his residence in Conway, two seasons of religious revival were enjoyed, and 132 persons were added to the church on profession. The church in this place was favored with four periods of refreshing from the presence of the Lord during his ministry, as the fruits of which 151 persons joined it by profession, and the church grew from 44 to 267 members; and the congregation, of which he took the charge in its infancy, rose from a few families to fill these walls.

But we must desist from noticing more particularly the labors of our departed brother.

Some of the facts in his personal history have been given. A few others only will be added. Mr. Crosby was born of highly respectable parents in Hampden, Penobscot county, in the State of Maine, October, 1799. There he had his early education, and acquired the rudiments of his classical knowledge; and from thence he joined Yale College in the autumn of 1819. After completing the usual term of study, he graduated there and entered Andover Theological Seminary in the autumn of the year 1823. Immediately on leaving the Seminary he commenced preaching in Conway in this State, and was ordained there in January, 1827. The fatigue and exposure incident to so extended a parish, were too exhausting to his strength, and he felt compelled, reluctantly to himself and them, to leave that people in July, 1833, and was installed over the Winthrop church, as its first pastor, in the following month. Here he remained, with varying health, till about a year ago, when he was compelled, in accordance with the advice of his physician, to relinquish his pulpit labors. But neither himself, nor his friends, nor his medical advisers supposed that he might not, after a little recruiting, enjoy good health, and perform, in another sphere, the labors of a sound man. When he subsequently learned that his labors were called for in the direct promotion of the foreign missionary work, in which he had long been peculiarly interested, he regarded such an opening as, of all others, the most desirable; and he at once entered on the editorial

labors at the Missionary House, with a zest and an amount of information, which few could bring. But he was still tasking his powers too hardly; and after laboring just long enough to confirm the high hopes previously entertained of his great usefulness, and teach his associates how much to value and love him as a fellow-laborer, he was, about the middle of December last, obliged to withdraw, and to participate in their counsels and labors no more. When attacked with his last illness, in December, he was confident from the first, that he should not recover. In the taking down of this house of clay he anticipated a long and painful sickness and a distressing death, and expressed some fear that he might be left to impatience and complaint. But he added that he would not be anxious, for he was sure that God would do all things well. Aside from the circumstances just adverted to, death had no terrors to him. He spoke of it with the greatest familiarity and composure to his friends and his physician; and he enjoined it upon the latter to inform him frankly, as soon as any decisive indications of the fatal nature of his disease should be developed. One day he said to a friend who visited him, 'I have been examining myself to learn if I have any will of my own respecting the result of this sickness, and I find that if it were left with me, I should, of choice, with the highest pleasure, refer it back to God to do just as he sees best. I have examined the point repeatedly and I am sure I am not mis-

taken.' When his physician informed him that he probably could not recover, he said to a friend the next day, 'I feel much better than yesterday: then I was in suspense as to what the Lord would do with me: now I understand that I am soon to die, and I am relieved from all uncertainty.' On another occasion he said, 'There is nothing in me, and I have done nothing which I can offer as a ground of acceptance with God. All my hope is in Christ.' That he had exercised the faith required in the gospel he thought he could not doubt: he had had so many manifestations of God's love to him, and was so fully conscious of taking delight in God and in his service, that it seemed to him there could be no mistake: he could rest on Christ firmly and quietly.

He spoke with deep emotion of God's providential goodness to him all his life. He was carried, he said, by he knew not what impulse, contrary to the wish and advice of all his friends, to Yale College; and it so happened that that was the only college in New England, in which there was a revival of religion during the four years of his college life. He mentioned the providential kindness manifested to him in his family relations and the circle of friends which he had enjoyed; in permitting him to labor so happily and, as he hoped, usefully, in the two churches to which he had sustained the pastoral relation; in preserving this church from divisions since he had been removed from them,

and in causing them to unite so perfectly in another pastor, and such a successor as he himself would have chosen. He mentioned the kindness of friends in his sickness; the provision made for his son—just what he desired; the comfort of body and mind which he enjoyed, so different from what he feared. 'Here I am,' said he, 'with no pain, no anxiety, all my wants met, just waiting God's time to die.'

His thoughts were, of course, much turned towards that heaven which was opening before him, and the faith which is the substance of things hoped for and the evidence of things not seen, was strikingly exemplified by him;—not in producing raptures or ecstatic visions of the imagination; but in giving him intelligent and realizing views and confident anticipations of the things beyond the vail. They were to him as real, as substantial, as were the objects around him. 'In looking forward to heaven,' said he, 'I can conceive of nothing better than serving God perfectly and forever.' How well his life had evinced the spirit and made the preparation for such a heaven!

When informed, by his physician, of the circumstances attending the recent sudden death of an aged and eminent servant of God, our departed brother remarked that such a death was what he would choose for himself as most desirable; and in less than one fortnight, he closed his life in a manner even more sudden and apparently less distressing.

Thus our brother passed away. And why linger around that body which he has left? He is not there. And why are our thoughts all directed along the road which leads to the grave where that body shall moulder to dust? Recall those grovelling and earthly emotions. Turn them toward where our brother now is. Send them back to that chamber which we have called the chamber of death, but which henceforth shall be called the chamber of life. Thence give them a new direction. Did not a living spirit there break away from its frail and dilapidated prison, from which for years it had been struggling to be free; and thence, loosed from all its earthly fastenings and entanglements, soar away to a world where there is a life with no burdens, no sorrows, no diseases, no deaths? Death! was it?—The beginning of life rather! There

> They live! they greatly live, a life on earth
> Unkindled, unconceived.

In addressing a word to the bereaved Partner and Family of our deceased brother, what shall I say; or whence shall I bring consolation? Dear Madam, it is not in me: nor is there any earthly support or consideration which can calm that agitated breast and heal that bleeding heart. But, should I ask you, as the prophet of the Lord inquired of another, in circumstances not wholly dissimilar, Is it well with thee?—is it well with thy husband?—is it well with thy children? Could you not reply, It

is well. The Lord hath done all things well. Half your family in heaven—and half on earth! The departed have gone a little earlier—the remainder are preparing to follow. How short, how narrow the separation!—

> ONE FAMILY, we dwell in Him,
> One church, above, beneath;
> Though now divided by the stream—
> The narrow stream of death.
> Ev'n now to their eternal home
> Some happy spirits fly;
> And we are to the margin come,
> And soon expect to die!

You can approach the same Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, to whose more glorious presence your husband is now admitted, and 'of whom the WHOLE FAMILY in heaven and on earth is named.' You have the same compassionate Saviour—the same indwelling Spirit. You will often worship together before the same throne; and may the God whom the husband and father served, according to the riches of his grace, strengthen you with might by his Spirit, and be the father of the fatherless and the God and Judge of the widow!

Do this Church and Congregation hear their late Pastor, as he starts on his flight towards heaven, say, I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do? Finished! That faithful ministry finished! What! is that preacher no more to speak from this pulpit! that pastor no more to enter your houses!

Will he no more instruct? no more warn? no more invite? Is he no more to counsel? no more to comfort? no more to pray? no more to guide to heaven?—THAT MINISTRY FINISHED! And what is the state of your souls? Sinner,—is that faithful and laborious ministry sealed up, and thy soul not saved? Christian, hast thou grown in knowledge, in grace, in holy activity in God's service, as such teaching, such exhortation, such example as have been granted thee, should have made thee? If called to thy account as suddenly, couldst thou say as truly, I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do?

Fellow Servants in the Christian Ministry, this is our day for working. The day of account and of rest is hastening on. How near it may be we know not. One of our number has just gone. Are we such minute men, that, if our Master should draw away the curtain right at our side, we could each say for himself, as we stepped across the threshold of eternity, I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do? Have we done for our own souls—have we done in those spheres of labor where our Lord has placed us—have we done for this miserable world, all which it was incumbent on us to do? Alas, for our long arrears of service unperformed! For bringing up these no provision is made in the terms of that fealty which binds us to our Heavenly Master. Each day comes filled with

its own labors—each day demands for itself the whole man. Let, then, DO WITH THY MIGHT — be our watchword. Each of us must soon say with Paul, 'The time of my departure is at hand.' At that crisis may we each be able also to say with him, truly and triumphantly, 'I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness.'

DA
7260
.798
G7

THE LIBRARY
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA
Santa Barbara

THIS BOOK IS DUE ON THE LAST DATE
STAMPED BELOW.

50m-3,'68(H9242s8)9482

UC SOUTHERN REGIONAL LIBRARY FACILITY
A 001 031 517 4